

## Book Reviews

### **Eclectic Counselling (Working with an Integrated Model).**

*By Gary Hermansson. Palmerston North. HW Associates. 1992, p.178.*

This book has two main sections. The first presents an eclectic framework titled ARPI. It introduces the notion of an integrated model and its conceptual origins, describes the reciprocal relationship between client and counsellor, and details the main features ARPI has as a model of the counselling process by reference to its four constituents - attending, responding, personalising and initiating. Within each of the four major chapters Hermansson defines subskills, illustrates them, diagrams their interrelationship and shows how they are used within the context of a case which accumulates chapter by chapter.

In the second section of the book he discusses broader counselling strategies, grouped on the basis of their focus on thinking, feeling, or action respectively. The ten strategies covered are presented in terms of their major beliefs, key concepts, underpinning literature, and pertinent counsellor behaviours. This section ends with a contextual analysis of practice and culture.

The greatest strength of this book lies in its overview role. Hermansson integrates basic skills and strategies into an eclectic overview of the counselling process. This is, after all, what most counsellors work from in their clinical practice. It is necessary to understand how client and counsellor interact in a meaningful and purposeful process. It is important to recognise how counselling strategies derived from diverse theoretical foundations contribute to this process. And it is crucial for all practitioners to acknowledge their ultimate responsibility to client rather than theory. Within a brief overview, Hermansson provides a clear integration of these varied themes. At the same time this book does not, and does not

claim to, break significant new ground or pursue any of its themes to great depth. All the skills, strategies and concepts have been described in detail elsewhere in the literature. There is no extensive critique of concepts or strategies described. And Hermansson has not written a textbook on how to become a counsellor. He has written, for students and practitioners alike, a clear, brief yet comprehensive overview of the counselling process that provides a steady framework in the confusing welter of contradictory theories and practices.

**Hans Everts, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Auckland.**

*Editor's note: Subsequent to the receipt of Everts' review, the following review of G.L. Hermansson, Eclectic Counselling was submitted. In view of the different perspective it presents, both reviews have been included.*

Gary Hermansson has been director of the post-graduate programme in counselling and guidance in the Massey University Faculty of Education for over a decade. The programme provides an Extramural distance-teaching structure which serves to train guidance counsellors throughout the country.

Drawing upon his extensive experience, Dr Hermansson has produced a book entitled Eclectic Counselling which is in two parts. Let me address the second part first. In Part Two many general and specific methodologies are offered under the heading of "Initiating Strategies". This section contains chapters on Thinking-Oriented, Feeling-Oriented and Action-Oriented Strategies. The main models included in Initiating Strategies are decision-making, transactional analysis, hypnosis, rational-emotive therapy, Gestalt therapy, neuro-linguistic programming, reality therapy and behavioural methods. Case examples and relevant sources are plentiful. In this respect the book draws upon course content assiduously compiled for teaching purposes. It makes available to readers a rich and up-to-date

resource. There are gaps, of course, but that is inevitable in a field in which practice often outpaces basic research and theory. Carkhuff's research-based distinction of Feeling, Thinking and Action processes provides the eclectic framework. No explanation is offered for discussing Thinking Strategies before Feeling.

Dr Hermansson acknowledges this reviewer as having helped him when a graduate student "to grapple with Carkhuff's material" and as having aided him in his "understanding of the (Carkhuff) HRD model's potential and limitations".

It is the fact that the present book is dominated by the Carkhuff model which is problematic. This book dismisses Carkhuff, the originator of the central theory and methodology, but then uses a variation of this very material to form the major content of Part One and the framework and rationale for Part Two.

It is important to spell out this inherent contradiction. First, Hermansson claims to have already arrived, before Carkhuff it seems, at a major theoretical concept, namely that without active, goal-directed inputs, counselling a la Rogers was a "seemingly endless cycle of exploration in search of insight" (p.1).

Then follows an acknowledgement of the work of Robert Carkhuff and his colleagues. The (HRD) model is described as "a powerful explanatory framework and a reliable working model for effective counselling" (p.2).

Next, Hermansson proceeds with an attack on Carkhuff under the heading of "Disenchantment", using words like "arrogant", "evangelistic", "prescriptive", "restrictive" and "rigid". In effect what Hermansson disliked was the very feature he claims to have already realised to be missing: the ability to move forward on the base of sensitivity and responsiveness.

On this basis, Hermansson proceeds to expound what he claims to be a better version of the Carkhuff HRD model. He gives it the rather naive acronym the ARPI model, which stands for Attending, Responding, Personalising and Initiating. The whole of Part

One is devoted to the ARPI model, which the author says is "descriptive rather than prescriptive and flexible rather than rigid" (p.3). He also sees it as being eclectic, presumably in contrast with Carkhuff, despite the fact that the Carkhuff model is a work of brilliant eclecticism.

Part One, The Eclectic Framework, is an explanation and illustration of the ARPI steps.

Hermansson asks the obvious question: "Given ARPI's obvious links with HRD, is there any real difference...?" In answer he acknowledges that he considered and discarded the possible creation of a new set of terms to "set off my personal framework". It is perhaps fortunate that he realised that this would have a "hollow ring". Nevertheless he proceeds to justify ARPI and the book by saying he has "shaped (the essential components) personally", given them "a particular stress in terms of philosophy and application", and "maintain(ed) as well as extend(ed) the eclectic promise that Carkhuff's early ideas offered. And in conclusion to this justification, "The model developed here has perceptive and skilled eclecticism as a central pillar and extends features of the basic HRD model in this direction" (see p.11 for the above quotes.)

Consider another feature. The IEUA model of client process is mentioned as "developmental phases that all of us go through". The letters stand for Involvement-Exploration-Understanding-Action. This is a brilliant summation of the effects of good counselling. But this model is again straight HRD, though referred to obliquely as "a universal learning/development process" (p.15).

One could go on. What Hermansson is at pains to convey is that the models from which he draws are from the earlier phase and he is now making it "user friendly" and more effective. It may be noted: First, whereas the HRD model is backed up by over 100 research articles, over 1,000 research applications and over 30 books, no research evidence is offered

to support the claims Hermansson makes for his "improvements". They are subjective and insubstantial. Second, no HRD materials beyond 1974 are referred to (except one revision). Finally, there is no matching body of published New Zealand research to support the modifications offered. Indeed it must be asked, what are they?

What we have here then is an unsubstantiated claim to have extended and improved the basic Carkhuff model. In this reviewer's opinion, Hermansson simply detracts from it by an attack on the attitudes and style of a major international scholar, and then claims to have remedied unproven deficits. There is a book Hermansson could have written, perhaps entitled, "How To Use Carkhuff's Model in Counsellor Training", for this is what has been produced. As Carkhuff has gone on to demonstrate, the model itself is the method for its own further development.

**Alan Webster, Associate Professor of Education, Massey University.**

### **Adolescent Suicide Assessment and Intervention.**

*By Alan L. Berman and David A. Jobes. Washington D.C., American Psychological Association, 1991. p. 277.*

The significant increase in the rate of youth suicide over recent years is of concern to counsellors working with adolescents and their families. This book is timely in providing an insightful analysis of the phenomenon of adolescent suicide. In consequence, it contributes substantially to the knowledge base that is necessary to guide the development of our thinking and our practice.

The authors have presented a wealth of material in a style that is accessible to both practitioners and researchers. The early chapters on the epidemiology of adolescent suicide, the theoretical and empirical contexts,

establish an historical perspective and analyse the contribution of theory and research to contemporary understandings. These chapters provide a solid conceptual framework for the central part of the book, which covers assessment of risk and treatment of the suicidal adolescent.

The final chapter deals with prevention and postvention. Of particular interest here are brief reviews of community and school-based prevention programmes, and a review of aspects of bereavement by suicide and interventions with survivors. Extensive references are provided after each chapter.

Do not be put off by the fact that the statistics and specific illustrations quoted in the first chapter, on the epidemiology of adolescent suicide, are American. Apart from interesting similarities in trends that New Zealand readers will identify, the themes addressed in each chapter are relevant internationally.

Far from being a dry academic tome, this is a stimulating and readable book. Throughout each chapter, the authors have incorporated many case studies as illustrations, and they discuss implications for assessment and intervention particularly thoroughly. Thus it is strongly practical as well as theoretical. Recently I have known several counsellors working with suicidal adolescents who have found this book a very helpful resource.

In the Introduction, Berman and Jobes acknowledge the rapid pace of developments in the field, and state, "We have tried to reflect what is current and promising in working with the suicidal adolescent while recognising the spectrum of options open to the practitioner." Readers will find they have succeeded admirably in achieving this aim. I strongly recommend this book to both researchers and practitioners working with adolescents.

**Margaret Nelson Agee, MA, Dip Guid Education Department, Auckland University.**